

## Land Office Glossary

£ - see "pound"

§ - abbreviation for section; found (on this website) in Acts of the Kentucky General Assembly

**acre** - 208.7 feet = 43,560 square feet = 160 square rods

**agent** - person appointed/hired to oversee the land patent process to ensure legal procedure is followed; often given power-of-attorney.

**assignee (abb. "afs'ee")** - individual purchasing (or acquiring) all or part of a warrant or survey from another individual during the land patent process.

**assignment** - transfer of interest in the warrant or survey. Includes signature of person making assignment, names of witnesses, & date of assignment.

**auditor of public accounts** - overseer of Kentucky land patents from 1898 to 1934.

**caveat** - a filing that prevents a grant from issuing until the validity of the new patent is decided by court judgment.

**cc (abbreviation in survey description)** - chaincarriers for the field surveying team; see "cm" for additional information. Concept still used in modern football games.

**certificate of settlement** - document allowing settlers in Kentucky County, VA, prior to January 1, 1778, to purchase 400 acres if they had made improvements or planted a crop on the land they intended to patent. Authorized many of the patents in the Virginia & Old Kentucky Series.

**chain** - used by surveyors for measuring distance; may be 66' (4 poles or 100 links) or 33' (2 poles or 50 links). Chains are used in present-day football games to measure ten-yard lengths.

**Chief Magistrate** - synonym for Kentucky's Governor

**Clark's Grant** - 150,000-acre land appropriation from the Virginia General Assembly to Gen. George Rogers Clark & his men for their service in the Northwestern Campaign. Land patents located in Southern Indiana.

**cm (abbreviation in survey description)** - chainmen for field surveying team. Two chainmen required, one for each end of the chain. Must be able to lift & carry heavy surveyors' chain over great distances.

**commissioner's certificate** - warrant issued by local commissioners to individuals meeting age & residency requirements. Does not convey title. Patents in the South of Green River Series are authorized by commissioners' certificates.

**commonwealth** - "for the good of all"; Kentucky, Virginia, Pennsylvania, & Massachusetts are "commonwealths". Must be one of the original thirteen colonies or a state created from one of the colonies. (Kentucky is a daughter of Virginia.)

**compass** - surveyor's instrument used to determine direction in degrees or bearing

**compos mentis** - Latin term meaning "of sound mind; sane; responsible"

**County Court Order Patent Series** - largest patent series; still used to appropriate land under provisions of KRS 56. Surveys are authorized by warrants purchased from county/fiscal courts.

**county levy** - county taxes; used to pay for internal improvements, such as water-wells and courthouses.

**court of appeals deeds** - contain conveyances after patents are issued; usually involve out-of-state residents or heirs settling estates.

**crier** - auctioneer at public sales or person who shouts public announcements through the town; term used in legislation regarding West of Tennessee River (Non-Military) Patents

**CS (abbreviation in survey description)** - conductor of survey (ref: KLV patent #17684). Ensures survey is conducted properly. (syn: Hk or Housekeeper)

**DD (abbreviation usually found in margin of Grant)** - deed delivered

**deed** - subsequent conveyance after initial patent is issued; filed with the county clerk.

**deed poll** - a deed not indented, that is, polled or even, made by one party only

**deputy surveyor** - assists county surveyor. May conduct the field survey.

**director of survey** - see "housekeeper"

**distd cc (abbreviation in survey description)** - disinterested chain carriers; may also appear as "distd cm": abbreviation for "disinterested chainmen"

**draw** - a land basin that water drains into or through

**DSMC (abbreviation in survey description)** - Deputy Surveyor (Mercer) County; third letter abbreviates the county in which the land is located

**entry** - second step in land patenting. Filing in county surveyor's entry book that reserves land until the field survey is made.

**exchange warrant** - replaces lost or mislaid warrants; may be issued to divide larger warrant into smaller denominations. For example, one 10,000-acre treasury warrant may be "exchanged" for ten 1,000-acre treasury warrants.

**Ex'd** - executed

**Exmd & Recd** - examined and recorded

**federal public domain** - any state that is not a state-land-state. Land appropriations overseen by federal Bureau of Land Management.

**feme covert** - Latin term meaning "married woman"

**feme sole** - Latin term meaning "unmarried woman"; may also refer to a married woman owning property in her own right

**first-rate land (for tax purposes)** - highest appraisal rate; similar to lands in the Bluegrass area (See article "Researching Early Ky Tax Lists" in online "Reference Library.")

**French & Indian War Warrant** - issued as payment for military service in the French & Indian War. Does not convey title. May be assigned or combined with other warrants to patent land. Authorized patents in the Virginia & Old Kentucky Patent Series.

**grant** - fourth step in land patenting. Document issued by the governor conveying title to previously unappropriated land.

**grantee** - individual or entity acquiring land title.

**grantor** - entity conveying title; in land patenting, the grantor is the Commonwealth of Virginia or Kentucky.

**Gt Isd (abbreviation usually found on back of survey)** - grant issued

**gully** - narrow ravine; hollow worn in the earth by a current of water

**gut** - narrow passage or gully as of a stream or path

**hair grass** - one of several species of slender-stemmed & slender-leaved grasses

**headright claims** - term for warrants/certificates issued to persons meeting age & residency requirements under South of Green River Patent Series.

**Henderson's Grant** - 200,000-acre land appropriation (from the Virginia General Assembly) to Richard Henderson of the Transylvania Company. Land located in Henderson County, Kentucky.

**hk (abbreviation in survey description)** - housekeeper for field surveying team; ensures survey is conducted properly.

**importation warrant** - issued to shipowners for transporting persons to America; usually 50 acres per person. (Some Kentucky patents were authorized by importation warrants.)

**iss'd** - issued

**Jackson Purchase** - that portion of Western Kentucky acquired by 1810 Treaty with Chickasaw Indian Nation.

**Jacob's staff** - held by member of surveying team; used to sight and measure distance.

**Jillson's Index of Ky. Land Grants** - comprehensive listing of land patent recipients from 1779

to 1924; compiled by Willard R. Jillson.

**junior patent** - patent which may cover part or all of previously patented property.

**Kaintucke** - found in early surveys, usually referring to Kentucky River or Kentucky County, Virginia.

**KAPS** - Kentucky Association of Professional Surveyors; headquarters in Frankfort, Ky.

**Kentucky Land Warrant Patent Series** - land patent series authorized by warrants sold by Kentucky Land Office in Frankfort; may include warrants given to commissioners overseeing local infrastructure improvements.

**KRS 56** - chapter of Kentucky Revised Statutes defining land patenting process

**KSPE** - Kentucky Society of Professional Engineers; headquarters in Frankfort, Ky.

**land commissioners** - four-member commission appointed to determine validity of settlement & preemption claims.

**Land Law of May 1779** - approved by Virginia's General Assembly, this legislation established the land patent process in Kentucky.

**land office** - established in 1779 by Virginia General Assembly to receive & record land patent records; continued in 1792 after Kentucky's separation from Virginia. Office abolished in 1898 by Act of Kentucky's General Assembly.

**lick (aka salt lick)** - a deposit of natural salt cropping out at the surface of the earth; often frequented by animals, such as buffalo

**link** - surveying measurement; 7.92 inches

**locator (or locater)** - person employed to find unappropriated land for patenting; may receive as much as 1/3 of the acreage as payment "if the patent is not declared void".

**Lord Dunmore's War** - 1774 conflict between troops under Lord Dunmore (VA's last royal governor) & Native Americans for control of Ohio Valley resulting in Treaty of Camp Charlotte. Some patents in our VA Series are authorized by Warrants awarded for service in this battle.

**m or mk (abbreviation in survey description)** - marker for field surveying team; blazes trees or plants stakes used as corners.

**Master Index** - comprehensive listing of Virginia patents in Kentucky territory prior to 1792; indexed by survey name. There is a cross-index in the back of the publication identifying grant name if different than survey name.

**metes & bounds** - metes = bearing, direction & distance; bounds = corners, may be trees or stakes.

**Middleton Offset** - A 101 acre indentation in the Kentucky-Tennessee border in Simpson County; attributed to Cox & Peebles, official boundary surveyors.

**mile** - 5,280 feet = 1760 yards = 80 chains

**Military District (Kentucky)** - established by Virginia for usage of military warrants issued for service in Virginia Continental Line or Virginia State Militia. Location, set by Virginia Land Law of 1779, is south of Green River in Southwestern Kentucky.

**Military District (Ohio)** - located along Little Miami River in Ohio. Additional district for Virginia Revolutionary War veterans (or assignees). Used exclusively after Kentucky's separation from Virginia in 1792.

**moiety** - an indefinite share or part, usually a half

**Old Kentucky Patent Series** - first land patent series signed by Kentucky governors. Includes military patents.

**patent** - (noun or verb) The method by which government disposes of unappropriated land.

**patent deed** - see "grant"

**patentee** - person acquiring unappropriated land by the patent process

**path (syn: trace or trail)** - a beaten path or trail left by the passage of persons, buffalo, etc.; an early road

**pence** - monetary unit of the United Kingdom; plural of penny

**pilot (for survey)** - see "housekeeper".

**plat** - surveyor's drawing that depicts the tract being patented.

**plot** - (verb) to generate a map, (ex. "plot the calls for a survey map")

**pole** - surveying measurement. One pole equals 16.5 feet or 25 links. Syn: "rod".

**poll tax** - tax assessed on voters; usually short-term. May be used to pay for establishment of voting precincts.

**Poor Person's Act** - 1781 Act of Virginia General Assembly allowing "certain poor persons" to patent up to 400 acres in Kentucky

**pound** - monetary unit of the United Kingdom, equal to 20 shillings or 100 (new) pennies.  
Symbol: £

**preemption warrant (1000 acres)** - document allowing settlers in Kentucky County, VA, prior to January 1, 1778, to purchase 1000 acres adjoining certificate of settlement claims. Authorized many of the patents in the Virginia & Old Kentucky Series.

**preemption warrant (400 acres)** - authorized by Land Law of 1779. May be purchased by settlers proving residency in Kentucky Co., VA between January 1, 1778, and May 1779. Authorized many of the patents in the Virginia & Old Kentucky Series.

**public land mapping system** - method of surveying; principal meridian is established then the territory is divided into ranges, townships and sections.

**quarter-section** - 160 acres; usually identified as NE, SE, NW or SW.

**ravine** - long, narrow, deep gully or hollow in the earth's surface, worn by a stream or flood of water

**Rec'd** - received or recorded

**register of the land office** - official overseeing Kentucky's land patent process & records. First

established by Virginia Land Law of 1779; abolished by 1992 amendment to Kentucky Constitution.

**removed certificate** - similar to an exchange warrant; primarily seen in South of Green River Series when county formation changes the name of the county issuing the warrant/certificate.

**revenue tax** - state tax collected by county commissioners; sent to General Fund in Frankfort.

**Revolutionary War Warrant** - issued as payment for military service. Does not convey title. May be assigned or combined with other warrants to obtain a land patent. Authorized patents in the Virginia, Old Kentucky, & West of Tennessee River Military Patents Series.

**rod** - surveying measurement. One rod equals 16.5 feet or 25 links. Syn: "pole".

**salt lick (aka lick)** - a deposit of natural salt cropping out at the surface of the earth; often frequented by animals, such as buffalo

**Sct or SS (usually written beside county name)** - abbreviation for Latin word "scilicet" (to wit), meaning "in particular" or "namely"; included to the right of the venue

**second-rate land (for tax purposes)** - second-highest appraisal rate; usually gently-rolling hillsides (See article "Researching Early Ky Tax Lists" in online "Reference Library.")

**Secretary of State** - overseer of Kentucky land patents from 1934 to present date.

**section** - 640 acres or one square mile

**senior patent** - patent that may pre-date later patents on the same property.

**shilling** - colonial America coin, varying in value from 12 to 16 cents; monetary unit of the United Kingdom equal to 5 (new) pennies or 1/20 of a pound. Symbol: /.

**slough (also spelled slew, slue)** - a swamp, bog or marsh, especially one that is part of an inlet or backwater

**SMC (abbreviation in survey description)** - identifies name of county surveyor; middle abbreviation matches name of county. In this instance SMC could be Surveyor Madison County.



**South of Green River Patent Series** - land patent series developed for the former military district in Southwestern Kentucky. Warrant recipients met age & residency requirements.

**South of Walker's Line Patent Series** - patent series for land in Northern Tennessee running from Kentucky border to 36°30" latitude.

**square mile** - 640 acres.

**SS (usually written beside county name)** - see Sct

**stamp (aka revenue stamp; tax stamp)** - affixed to documents (such as deeds or marriage bonds), tobacco products, liquor, hunting licenses, etc., after fees or taxes have been paid

**state warrant** - same as Treasury Warrant (see VA Patent 62)

**state-land-state** - any state not in federal public domain. Has or has had a land office for in-state land appropriations. Original thirteen colonies plus Kentucky, Maine, Vermont, Texas, Tennessee, West Virginia & Hawaii are (or have been) state-land-states.

**survey** - (noun) third step in land patenting. Consists of a plat drawing, metes & bounds description & identification of survey team.

**survey certificate** - often refers to the metes and bounds description of the survey.

**surveying company** - business entities that surveyed frontier Kentucky and negotiated treaties with Native Americans; claims by surveying companies were declared void by Virginia and Kentucky government land laws.

**Tellico Patent Series** - land patent series covering that part of Southeastern Kentucky acquired by 1805 Treaty of Tellico with Cherokee Indian Nation.

**third-rate land (for tax purposes)** - lowest appraisal rate; difficult terrain, may be described as "untillable" (See article "Researching Early Ky Tax Lists" in online "Reference Library.")

**tithable** - taxpayer

**township** - square block consisting of 36 sections. Each section equals one square mile; used in

public land system of mapping. Covers 36 square miles.

**trace (syn: path or trail)** - a beaten path or trail left by the passage of persons, buffalo, etc.; an early road

**transit** - surveyor's instrument used to determine arc or horizontal angles; may be mounted on a tripod.

**Transylvania Company** - land company organized by Richard Henderson; negotiated and signed the 1775 treaty with the Cherokee at Sycamore Shoals.

**treasury warrant** - syn: State Warrant. Purchased from Virginia or Kentucky Land Office; no military service or residency requirement necessary to purchase treasury warrants.

**venue** - county or locality in which an action occurs; that part of a declaration that designates the county in which action is to occur

**Virginia Patent Series** - earliest series of land patents in Kentucky; grants signed by Virginia governors. Pre-date June 1, 1792. Includes military patents.

**walk-around survey** - survey drawing that is larger than actual tract being patented; surveyors often identify properties to be excluded from patents' acreage.

**warrant** - first step in land patenting, this document authorizes the survey. May be combined with other warrants to increase acreage.

**West of Tennessee River Military Patents** - land patents issued to Revolutionary War soldiers or their assignees after the Jackson Purchase was acquired.

**West of Tennessee River Non-Military Patents** - land patent series for Jackson Purchase area; land sold by quarter-section. Governor's grant finalized patent.